

### **Amendments to the Claims**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims:**

1. (previously presented) A method for increasing message costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising:

- receiving at a relaying computer over a data link a request from a sending computer to route a message to a recipient address;
- calculating a delay period, in response to the request;
- sending a command from the relaying computer to the sending computer, the command causing the sending computer to re-queue the message for re-transmission of the message to the relaying computer;
- dropping the data link;
- receiving over the data link a next request to route the message to the recipient address;
- dropping the data link, if the next request was received during the delay period;
- and
- routing the message referenced in the next request to the recipient address, if the delay period has expired.

2. (original) The method of claim 1:

- wherein the calculating element includes calculating the delay period once per day.

3. (original) The method of claim 1:

- wherein the calculating element includes calculating a random delay period.

4. (original) The method of claim 1:

- wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a transport layer command which closes the data link.

5. (original) The method of claim 1:

wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a TCP layer "FIN" command over the data link.

6. (original) The method of claim 1:

wherein the dropping element includes closing the data link at a network layer without sending any message back over the data link.

7. (original) The method of claim 1:

wherein the dropping element includes silently closing the data link at an IP layer.

8. (original) The method of claim 1:

wherein the message is an e-mail message.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1:

wherein the receiving element includes receiving over the data link the request to route the message from the sending computer to the recipient address hosted by the relaying computer.

10. (previously presented) A method for increasing message transaction costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising:

receiving over a data link at a receiving computer a request from a sending computer to route a message to a recipient address;

attempting to identify the recipient address; and

causing the sending computer to timeout by having the receiving computer drop the data link with the sending computer if the recipient address can not be identified by the receiving computer.

11. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the attempting element includes attempting to verify that the recipient address is valid.

12. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the attempting element includes attempting to verify that the recipient address known.

13. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a transport layer command which closes the data link.

14. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a TCP layer "FIN" command over the data link.

15. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the dropping element includes closing the data link at a network layer without sending any message back over the data link.

16. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the dropping element includes silently closing the data link at an IP layer.

17. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the message is an e-mail message.

18. (original) The method of claim 10:

wherein the address is an e-mail address.

19. (withdrawn) A method for increasing message transaction costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising:

generating faux addresses;

making the faux addresses available;  
receiving over a data link a request from a sending computer to route through a receiving computer a message to one of the faux addresses; and  
causing the sending computer to timeout by dropping the data link between the sending computer and the receiving computer in response to the receiving computer receiving the one of the faux addresses.

20. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the making element includes, publishing the faux addresses on a public network.

21. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a transport layer command which closes the data link.

22. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the dropping element includes transmitting a TCP layer "FIN" command over the data link.

23. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the dropping element includes closing the data link at a network layer without sending any message back over the data link.

24. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the dropping element includes silently closing the data link at an IP layer.

25. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

further comprising, treating the one of the faux addresses as valid for a predetermined period of time; and

wherein the dropping element includes, dropping the data link with the sending computer, after the predetermined period of time has expired.

26. (withdrawn) The method of claim 25:

wherein the treating element includes providing a faux validation of the one of the faux addresses back over the data link.

27. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26:

wherein the providing element includes downloading a file identified within the message.

28. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26:

wherein the providing element includes downloading an image file identified by an image reference within the message.

29. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

further comprising, treating the one of the faux addresses as valid until a number of messages addressed to the one of the faux addresses reaches a first predetermined number within a first predetermined time period; and

wherein the dropping element includes, dropping the data link, after the number of messages addressed to the one of the faux addresses exceeds the first predetermined number within the first predetermined time period.

30. (withdrawn) The method of claim 29:

further comprising, treating the one of the faux addresses as valid again after the number of messages addressed to the one of the faux addresses falls below a second predetermined number within a second predetermined time period.

31. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

generating additional faux addresses;

repeating the making, receiving, and dropping elements with respect to the additional faux addresses.

32. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the message is an e-mail message.

33. (withdrawn) The method of claim 19:

wherein the address is an e-mail address.

34. (previously presented) A system for increasing message transaction costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising a:

means for receiving at a relaying computer over a data link a request from a sending computer to route a message to a recipient address;

means for calculating a delay period, in response to the request;

means for sending a command from the relaying computer to the sending computer, the command causing the sending computer to re-queue the message for re-transmission of the message to the relaying computer;

means for dropping the data link;

means for receiving over the data link a next request to route the message to the recipient address;

means for dropping the data link, if the next request was received during the delay period; and

means for routing the message referenced in the next request to the recipient address, if the delay period has expired.

35. (previously presented) A system for increasing message transaction costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising a:

means for receiving over a data link at a receiving computer a request from a sending computer to route a message to a recipient address;

means for attempting to identify the recipient address; and

means for causing the sending computer to timeout by having the receiving computer drop the data link with the sending computer if the recipient address can not be identified by the receiving computer.

36. (withdrawn) A system for increasing message transaction costs to minimize junk or spam emails, comprising a:

- means for generating faux addresses;
- means for making the faux addresses available;
- means for receiving over a data link a request from a sending computer to route through a receiving computer a message to one of the faux addresses; and
- means for causing the sending computer to timeout by dropping the data link between the sending computer and the receiving computer in response to the receiving computer receiving the one of the faux addresses.

37. (withdrawn) The system of claim 36, further comprising:

- means for treating the one of the faux addresses as valid for a predetermined period of time.

38. (withdrawn) The system of claim 36, further comprising:

- means for treating the one of the faux addresses as valid until a number of messages addressed to the one of the faux addresses reaches a first predetermined number within a first predetermined time period.

39. (withdrawn) The system of claim 38, further comprising:

- means for treating the one of the faux addresses as valid again after the number of messages addressed to the one of the faux addresses falls below a second predetermined number within a second predetermined time period.